

**Understanding group shaping.
Transcontextual metapatterns
in dance movement psychotherapy.**

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Abstract

Spontaneous choreographies emerge during Dance Movement Psychotherapy group sessions. Metapatterns are considered as *metaphorical Gestalts*, signs of natural norms, named and categorized as systems. They imply forms and functions. They are present throughout all modes of existence (Volk, 1996). This paper explores how this concept can be applied to understanding the shape and shaping process of group dynamics in Dance Movement Therapy Sessions.

Introduction

Metapatterns contribute to the comprehension of an embodied perspective of meaning making and understanding. Meaning is related to what remains of the lived experience either in the body, a tree, a stone or a dance after surviving fundamental, natural and cultural selection respectively. These contents are communicated through its own embodied present being. Some choreographies, which emerge spontaneously, are patterns that have undergone cultural selection because they benefit human survival or represent something important we need to remember from time to time, when we are part of a group.

By observing groups in Dance Movement Therapy (DMT) sessions, dance movement therapists (DMTs) become witnesses and participant observers of spontaneous movement choreographies that emerge during the therapeutic process. This experience implies that we affect and are affected by the group experience, which is perceived through our own senses, personal lenses and theoretical backgrounds. As psychotherapists our interest has always been comprehension and understanding, deciphering the individual or group experiences, particularly the painful, incomprehensible, repetitive, compulsive, apparently inevitable ones, in a desire to give others and ourselves a discernible and integrated feeling of the lived

experiences that also allow us to continue to flow along our vital pathways. We do so by getting to know the patients' movement repertoires and by facilitating their expression, expansion and diversification. We consider that plasticity is related to relying on different resources to deal with life's challenges and uncertainties.

Human movement shows what is embodied and we try to understand it. What are the mechanisms that have brought us from lived experience to meaning, to concept and to words, (and vice-versa), in our personal and collective experience and throughout human history?

Without seeking an ultimate explanation, I propose to look at some ideas related to embodied meaning, with the intention of facilitating an understanding of the shapes, patterns or designs that arise in DMT group processes and which focus on *movement sensing and how movement makes sense* (Fischman, 2006, 2009).

The concepts of *metapatterns*, which have been researched and used in other fields (Volk, Bloom & Richards, 2007), might contribute to some further understanding to DMT resources through which we already perceive human movement.

Embedded in an embodied - enactive DMT perspective (Koch & Fischman, 2011), I will present the following concepts: *Patterns* (Wainstein, 2002), *Metapatterns* (Bateson, 2002; Volk, 1996), *Forms* (Wagensberg, 2013), *Image Schema* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 1991; Damasio, 2000, and *Morphic Fields* (Sheldrake, 2011). All these concepts have an affinity with, and add an embodied perspective to meaning and understanding movement, *shape and shaping*. They can apply to language and conceptual systems as a metaphorical background structure that arises from the body experience. The similarities and convergences among these different conceptualizations of *Form and Forming*, can lead us along the path of understanding embodied sense making.

Natural choreographies in DMT Groups

The ideas I will present arose from my personal experience observing groups dancing spontaneously within the setting of DMT sessions. When trying to understand group dynamics in movement, I watched rounds, trains, lines, braids, bridges, confronting lines, spirals, helixes, pairs, gathering and scattering processes, movement

going into the centre and towards periphery. Through all those shapes I could see what the group process was about and what the participants were expressing.

All those shapes and shaping processes were enacted within different *Forms of Vitality* (Stern, 2010) and hedonic tones. Some shapes looked as if they were *exploding, surging, accelerating, fading, fleeting, vanishing, pushing, tight, bound, loose, gentle, pulsing, disappearing, bursting, relaxing, tense, etc.* (Stern, 2010). Those natural choreographies were made with joy, excitement, sadness, pleasure, disgust, rage, by challenging, confronting, inviting, including, excluding, interacting and avoiding.

Clare Schmais, a DMT pioneer, (Schmais, 1977, 1985, 1998), observes that the *circle* serves as a communal space in which patients might begin to move and feel in harmony with themselves and others. This structure is democratic. Patients and therapists stand next to one another, in a similar non-threatening position. Some other configurations, Schmais describes are: *single lines*: One person behind another or one person next to another. It is related to priority, which goes first and which last, who leads, who follows, who is the head and who is the tail. *Parallel lines*: Two lines next to each other facing forward, to the side or facing towards one another. *clump*: Everyone together in a tight group, facing the same direction or being at an arm's length apart. *Cluster*: Small groups, usually 3, 4 or 5 people. *Scattered*: People spread about the room by themselves or in pairs or small groups.

Each DMT group tends to prefer certain favourite configurations that have particular meaning during the shaping processes. Most groups use a few select formations. Some forms rarely or never happen due to the patients' characteristics, the therapist's interventions and the context of the setting in which the work develops. But the formations that arise in just one session or among many, express, reflect and sustain the work, holding the feelings and interests of the group members during each stage of the group process. The configurations are understood within a dynamic process of shaping. It is interpreted in relation to a bigger whole, which includes the context, the conjuncture and the group and members' histories.

We use *metaphors* and *metaphoric thought* continuously to understand as well as to offer isomorphic images empathetic to the experience, emotions and the individual's state and participant's mood. We propose movement explorations that aim to attune to the subjective felt experience, whilst being broad enough to offer both structure and freedom. These proposals or invitations operate as a means of

supporting the patients' immersion into their worlds and ways of experiencing through movement and dance.

Patterns

Like all other species we share our habitat with, humans move about and this is a sign of our essential vitality. The movements we develop design dances in space, which constitute different ways of living and interacting. As Freud (1978, a), Spinoza (Deleuze, 2004), Maturana (1984), and Wagensberg (2013) state, we can say that the basic purpose of these movements is, *to persevere in our being*. We stay alive and allow the *germinal plasma* to flow through generations, developing our lineages. The embodied knowledge we inherit from our ancestors, are bequeathed to our offspring. In this way, we perpetuate our living generation after generation. By enjoying a quantum of pleasure in our own limited lives, we comply with our purpose of transferring life (Freud, 1982). Again and again we recreate similar experiences and also create others that have no precedent. Those experiences imply movement patterns that are embedded in our everyday lives and in our personal and collective development.

Looking through a zoom lens observing from different points, we are able to see repeated micro, macro and metapatterns that make up organic choreographies. Some of these fade while others persist and are stored, consciously or unconsciously, by groups and communities. Amongst these patterns we can include many different kinds of behaviours, such as: the courtship dance of cranes, military parades, the reactions (flight – fight- faint) in the face of attack, the dance of hellos and goodbyes, the soothing rocking of a baby as well as dances in the stricter sense such as Flamenco, Tango or circle dances.

Pattern is a concept that can be found in objects and practices worldwide, as well as in the perceptive abilities of the observer. The person who perceives has learnt through experience to compare experiences ever since the beginning of their life, from the first experiences of satisfaction finding common elements in them as well as differences and novelties that emerge (Freud, 1978,b). In his essay a "*Psychology Project for Neurologists*," Freud tells us about the Mnemonic trace or memory alluding to an imprinting on the unconscious in which qualities of the early experiences of satisfaction materialize.

We understand “*pattern*” as a particular order or placement of parts or elements, linked by ‘shape’, ‘design’ or ‘schema’ that functions as “*a model or guide for doing something,*” for example: behaviour (Wainstein, 2002, p.94). Patterns become structures that can be stereotyped, rigid or prone to transformation. Through conscious sensory perception, DMT proposes to get to know the spectrum of *movement patterns* available to the patient for interacting with the world, with the end goal of broadening this spectrum, unknotting the inhibited or blocked patterns and generating new *effective actions* to live a full life. In DMT we observe recurring *movement patterns* that characterize a person, group or community.

Metapatterns

Bateson (2002) adopted the term *metapatterns* to speak about what connects us all. His famous question and concern was “What is the pattern that connects the crab to the lobster and the primrose to the orchid, and all of them to me, and me to you?” His disciple, the environmentalist Tylor Volk (1996), in his book “*Metapatterns: Across Space, Time, and Mind*”, described them extensively.

Volk (1996) talks about patterns of patterns, in other words trans-contextual patterns that are so extensive that appear in a wide spectrum of phenomena, such as clouds, rivers, planets, cells, organisms, eco-systems, art, architecture and politics. It implies that there are universal functions in space, processes in time and mental concepts. Bateson (2002) calls the metapatterns that connect *functional forms* or particular meaningful connections, considering them to be more than mere repetitions. Bateson suggests that a pattern that connects is a *metapattern* and carries with it a vast generalization.

Volk (1996) explored a number of examples in the context of biology, the mind, culture and technology. He describes 11 of these metapatterns: *spheres, sheets, tubes, borders, binaries, centres, layers, calendars, arrows, breaks and cycles*. Volk speaks of *convergence*, referring to similarities in shape and function across the species. He says, for example, that the sphere is a broad pattern that implies the minimal surface area and the greatest volume. It is associated with equidistance, therefore equality. It has a function, purpose and advantage in survival. It is a metapattern that overcomes natural and cultural selection.

Metapatterns are *metaphorical Gestalts*, signs of natural norms, named and categorized as systems. They imply forms and functions. They are present throughout all modes of existence (Volk, 1996)¹.

Form and image schema

Other researchers refer to similar ideas. Wagensberg (2013) a Spanish musicologist and physicist, asks himself the same question Bateson did: “- What do a planet, a fish egg, and the ballpoint of a pen all have in common?” He states that objects and phenomena compose reality. Objects are matter, energy, or information that occupy space; phenomena imply object changes through time. Speaking about an object’s identity, Wagensberg holds that there are a set of qualities that define an object category, such as structure, composition, size, shape, frequency and function. He speaks extensively about *forms* or *shapes*. A large proportion of the objects that surround us share a much reduced number of forms. By repeating forms, Wagensberg says nature becomes full of rhythm and harmony and this makes it intelligible. He asks: -Why certain shapes -spheres, hexagons, spirals, helixes, parabolas, cones, and waves- are especially frequent? Why these and not others? How do they come about? How do they persevere?

Form is an object property and it functions because of having gone through some type of selection (fundamental, natural and cultural selection corresponding to inorganic, organic and cultural objects).²Wagensberg (2013) differentiates between *spontaneous shapes*, *alive shapes*, and *smart shapes*. *Spontaneous shapes*: Stones become round because of the environment’s pressure which makes them roll. They follow the laws of physics. *Alive shapes*: An egg got its form during evolution because of natural selection. It provides embryo protection. Inner warmth dissipates more slowly. *Smart shapes*:

¹Volk (1996) explored a number of examples in the context of Biology, the Mind, Culture and Technology. He describes 11 of these patterns: *spheres*, *sheets*, *tubes*, *borders*, *binaries*, *centres*, *layers*, *calendars*, *arrows*, *breaks* and *cycles*.

Spheres speak of functionality, completeness, and unity. As physical forms they maximize strength and durability. They have a reduced surface compared to their volume, minimizing their contact with the environment. The meanings that stand out for this form imply equanimity, multi-direction, simplification and containment.

Tubes are described as a succession of an indefinite continuity. They are related to planes, lines, order, beginning and ending, being first and last. Reaching point to point. They refer to leading and following, to advancing and retreating, front, back, directions and to becoming boundaries and edges. Tubes can transport energy, material or information.

³Wagensberg (2013) describes forms and functions. Sphere protects. Hexagon paves. Spiral bags. Helix grabs. Cone penetrates. The wave moves. Catenary holds. Fractals colonize.

Cultural selection operates. A cannon projectile has a round shape. It imitates the shape of the stones that our ancestors threw. They are human designed shapes.

I find much convergence between metapatterns and the concept of *Image Schema* coined by Johnson and Lakoff (1980, 1999). In their studies, these authors state that language is structured as a *Metaphor* that emanates from the bodily, sensory motor experience.

The imaginative structures of meaning have their origin in bodily experience like the image schema and their metaphorical elaborations (Whitehouse, 1999). Johnson (1991) centres on human bodily comprehension to obtain meaning and rationality as opposed to objectivism. He suggests that experience covers everything that makes us human: our bodily, social, linguistic and intellectual being, combined with complex interactions that make up our understanding of the world.

I suggest exploring some of the *imaginative bodily structures* that make up our network of meanings and lead to patterns of deduction and reflection at all levels of abstraction. These imaginative structures of comprehension are decisive regarding meaning and reason. In other words the abstract meanings, reason and imagination have a corporeal basis. Our reality is moulded by the patterns that govern our bodily movement, through spatial and temporal surroundings and by the form of our interaction with objects. In the following paragraph I present some examples of *Image Schema* and their intrinsic characteristics that intervene in metaphoric logic:

Container. It relates to the experience of physical containment or receptacles. We enter – we leave. It implies Inside – Outside, a spatial boundary. It also relates to Uterus, cradle and room, to separation, difference, restriction, limitation, and protection against external forces or resistance to them, limitation of forces.

Path. It means a source or starting point, and arrival point. It implies directionality, a sequence of continual emplacements, travelling from one point to another, going through intermediate points. It implies purpose, goal, and lineal space. It provides a mode of understanding temporality

Image schema and neuroscience

By asking – How do we know what we know? Antonio Damasio (2000) investigates how we arrive at awareness and the knowledge of the experience, the objects and changes of the medium. Awareness brings a sense of oneself and of

knowing. He links three phenomena: emotion, the feeling of emotion and knowing that we are feeling the emotion.

Damasio (2000) asks how the brain engenders the mental patterns that he calls the *image schema* of an object, alluding to a mental pattern in which one registers: tactile images, sound images, visceral images. In addition to transmitting the physical characteristics of objects, Image Schema translates the subjective reaction of sympathy or repulsion. It also brings awareness of the plans one has in respect of the object, as well as the network of relationships with other objects.

At the same time *image schema* are neural patterns, creations of the brain as products of an external reality. The image is neither a copy nor a representation. The image we see is based on changes that occur in our organism when the physical structure of the object interacts with the body.

The images are built around brain protocols and manifest transiently in multiple sensory and motor regions of the brain suitable for processing signals from specific zones of the body. In this way the images are biological entities. Damasio (2000) proposes that there is a relationship between the mapping and the territory. It is not point-to-point and it is not trustworthy. He sustains that each brain constructs maps using their own design.

We can see here a correspondence between what Johnson (1991) proposed as regards to imaginative function, in the construction of feeling, analogy and metaphor, as ways of speaking about reality, without pretention of exactness, objectivity and recognition of reality *per se*. Besides, Damasio warns that neurobiology still doesn't know how the neural pathway converts into an image. There is a missing link yet to be discovered (Damasio, 2000).

Convergences and divergences among forms, metapatterns, movement shapes and image schemas.

I recognise convergences and differences among all the perspectives that I have presented. We started by trying to find the commonalities and the coincidences, to arrive at a conceptualization of *metapatterns* understood in a wider sense.

The benefit *transcontextual metapattern* brings, is that it allows us to import information found in one field into another. By studying the feet of all kinds of beings, it becomes possible to create robot feet that might be used to support an object or to design prosthetic legs, Full (2007) uses "feet" as a metapattern in a remarkable TED video. Metapattern relates to shapes and their intrinsic functions.

Image schema comes from a linguistic metaphorical view of language, from an embodied perspective of conceptual systems, in which body mind circularity is essential (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999). Damasio (2000) offers the same concept but from a neuroscientist perspective. The patterns that connect are forms that we share with other creatures, with inorganic and cultural objects. These common shapes allow us to understand the existence of others.

Movement shapes, as part of Laban's Movement Analysis Effort-Shape system, which includes body and its relationship to space, needs to be understood within its own system. Shape alone does not have the same value as if it is seen relationally. While the body category primarily develops connections within the body and the body/space intent, the way the body changes shape during movement is further experienced and analysed through the shape category. All categories are related and shape is often an integrating factor for combining the categories into meaningful movement. Laban (1987) referred to two action forms: Gathering: inwards towards the body, bringing something toward the centre of the body. Movement of "possession" by which "an object is gripped", and is preserved. The most apparent activities are for the arms. Turning of the palms towards the body gives "a feeling" of contraction. Tying knots. Shrinking. Scattering: outwards away from the body" can be observed in pushing something away from the centre of the body, it is a movement of "repulsion" by which an object is propelled "outwards into space", turning of the palms and giving a feeling of opening out and of expansion such as untying knots, growing.

Laban (Laban, 1987; Longstaff, 2011), adopted Feuillet's (Longstaff, 2011). five forms into his spatial system (in Laban, 1927, p. 54) and then reduced these five forms to four: straight, simply curved, doubly curved (twisted), and round, rolling spiral (p. 62). Presumably the angular path is eliminated since it consists of two straight paths. North (1972) subscribes to the view that all the possible shapes are simply angular, round, or twisted and other forms are created from a combination of these basic ones. Laban further reduced movement shapes to just one pattern, since all paths are parts or metamorphoses of one basic trace-form, the spiral. Volk (1996) and Wagensberg (2013) consider spirals metapatterns.

Looking at the convergences we see that they all focus on *form, shape, design and pattern*. All look for meaning and understanding objects and phenomena. They all search for the meaning or function. They are all embodied perspectives. All can be related to metaphorical conceptual systems. All of them help us understand non-verbal expression, by making connections between body experience and language as a conceptual abstraction.

Morphogenetic resonance fields theory

To consider ours in an holistic perspective, in which we understand that we are part of a whole system and positing that every part is related to all the other parts affecting each other in different ways, I turn to Rupert Sheldrake (2011) and his theory of morphogenetic field which shares an interest in *form and forming* being embedded in an evolutionary paradigm.

Sheldrake (2011) states that organic beings develop, not just because of their genes but also because they are dependent on organized fields: the morphogenetic fields, which impose patterns of activity. Patterns are transmitted from past members of the species through a kind of non-local resonance called *morphic resonance*. Nervous system activities are inherited through *morphic resonance*, conveying a collective, instinctive memory. Each individual draws upon and contributes to the collective memory of the species. This means that new patterns of behaviour can be spread. Human societies have memories that are transmitted through the culture of the group, and are most explicitly communicated through the ritual re-enactment of a founding story or myth in which the past becomes present through a kind of resonance with those who have previously performed the same rituals.

In the morphogenetic model (form-shaping), living organisms are shaped by fields, which are both within and around them. Sheldrake states that DNA contributes to the materials from which the body is constructed: the enzymes, the proteins and so forth, while the plan, the form, the morphology of the body depends on what are called *complex patterns of physic-chemical interaction* (Sheldrake, 2011).

Morphic resonance influences like upon like and a connection is made among similar fields. The same principle applies to behaviour, forms and patterns of behaviour. The dissemination of behaviours over large distances can only be accounted for in terms of an independent parallel discovery of such a habit. This

researcher speaks about *tuning* mutations, which refers to the inheritance of acquired characteristics. Sheldrake (2011) sustains that most organisms are more similar to themselves in the past, than they are to any other organism. This self-resonance with past states of the same organism helps to stabilize the form of the organism, even though the cells are turning over and changing. The same happens with behaviours. Sheldrake suggests that the brain is more like a tuning dynamic system than a memory storage device (Sheldrake, 2011).

This perspective can be useful to comprehend some communication phenomena such as non-verbal communication (Birdwhistell, 1971), emotional contagion (Hatfield, Cacioppo & Rapson, 1993), imitation and mirroring (Iacoboni, 2008; Kohut, 1985; Meltzoff, 1990), family constellations (Hellinger, 2010) through individuals, groups and communities, even if they don't share space and time.

Sheldrake's theory helps us understand why metapatterns, are meaningful forms for our practice. From the beginning, Chace (Chaiklin, Sandel & Lohn, 1993) suggests that DMT means communication, expression and connection. Finding commonalities in points or forms allow us to get to a consensus, to find modes of *interbeing*, of coexisting (Fischman, 2008). The process of recursive interactions of structurally plastic systems so that one becomes a medium for the realization of the other, results in mutual coupling (Maturana, 2008). The effectiveness that the organism modes of conduct have for the realization of themselves, under their reciprocal interactions, is established during the history of their interactions and through their communication and *languaging*. Maturana (2008) states that sequences of mutuality create consensual domains of interbeing. He understands *languaging* as a manner of living in doing things together in the particular domain of consensual doings in which the languaging is taking place through the flow of the interactions of the participants, in recursive coordinations of behaviour (Maturana, 1995).

Metapatterns and metaphor in DMT

What is the relationship between metapatterns and metaphors? We may hypothesize that metapatterns, as well as image schema, are pervasive in embodied thought and that thought, as a conceptual system, and is essentially metaphorical in terms of Johnson and Lakoff speaking (1980). The concept of metapatterns, implemented in DMT, allows us to describe configurations, choreographies, designs and dynamic interactions, which are full of intrinsic meaning. We could say that these forms are stored in the body and are enacted through time and space. By recognising these shapes, and through free association and metaphorical thinking, we can reach a

deeper understanding of the lived experience. For example, if we witness a group dancing in a circle or coming together, shaping a compact mass, we perceive unity, equality, integration or fusion. Our abilities of perceiving and decoding happen through our own associations and experiences with sphericity. If, on the other hand, a group is aligned, one person behind another, we might imagine a line that starts and ends, with a head and a tail, like trains, wagons or people waiting in line to take a bus. If they are standing one in front of the other holding hands up while others pass under them, we see a kind of tunnel they pass through to get from one point to another. These configurations roll us back to spheres, tubes, bridges which are considered metapatterns with transcontextual meaning and intrinsic functions such as protecting, connecting and penetrating respectively. Metapatterns allow us to recognise shapes and understand on a general level. Other qualities, such as intensity, emotional tones, vitality affect, or any other particularity, add information of what is going on in the complexity of experience. We use imagination and metaphorical thinking to understand what we perceive.

A group vignette

Here is the narration of a movement configuration process during a DMT group session with adults. After warming up and during the development of emergent spontaneous dance movement improvisation, almost half of the participants were in a *scattered configuration*. They were spread around the room running, jumping, laughing and making loud noises, whilst the rest of the group remained together being quiet and silently piling on top of one another, nestling in, shaping a *clump*. Two different choreographies and two different affective tones arose. One felt a high level of energy and the clump felt tension. It looked like part of the group was very excited and the other half was protecting themselves by being very close together. Some members of the quiet group looked anxious and scared paying a lot of attention to the other part of the group that was moving around them excitedly, and who were suddenly approaching the clump closely. The dynamic evolved into a polarization, almost into a group split. It looked like one group was provoking and the other was withdrawing into a small space. As the dance movement therapist in charge of the emotional and physical safety of each member of the group, I felt some concern about the unbalanced situation. Should I wait till the group finds a resolution? It might have been possible, but I intervened suggesting both groups to try the opposite of what they were doing. I suggested that they went out of their spontaneous comfort zones, made a transition, and tried what the others were doing. They did so for some

time till the group gathered again into a whole with some distance among the members but they were conscious of each other. After the moving, we continued by sharing verbally about how the experience had been for them, what they noticed, what their feelings were and what the kinds of individual and group movements they were enacting were. What came out was that some of the participants felt that being quiet was related to death, to collapse, to defeat, that they needed to feel alive, jumping and laughing, trying to be happy. The quiet participants felt that they needed to rest, to have some calmness and silence and they added that they were scared, feeling that they might be attacked. They were afraid of aggression. It was interesting to find the common point the group shared. Both were anxious about something; both were defending themselves, in their small groups, from a kind of enemy that they were rejecting. This was expressed in movement. Each of them had these feelings because of different personal reasons which they were finally able to share. At the beginning they joined the participants who were in the same *resonant field*. Finding similarity in others was a relief and it empowered their conduct. As a dance movement therapist I asked them to go against what was effortless for them. I asked them to leave their comfort zones and get into what they rejected, like *confronting the monsters*, as Dennis McCarthy would say (2007). Each person becomes able to recognize his anxiety, and to experience some relief and keep on working with what emerged.

Comprehension, intervention and evaluation in DMT

In what ways can DMT help to integrate the concepts presented? Firstly, regarding the ways in which the concepts *forms, patterns, metapatterns, image schema and morphic Fields* help us understand the operational functions that imply felt body movement shapes. This allows us to facilitate decoding group dynamics by using metapatterns, analogies, and metaphors.

Secondly, we can implement *metapatterns* as doorways into movement exploration. We have already been doing so, perhaps naming it differently. Which dance therapist hasn't proposed exploring the connections between different body parts, polarities, pathways, routes of energy, by moving one part of the body and then another? What is it like if I move from my core or if I start from my periphery? Or when we invite people to move within a watery environment like the sea, or within a jar of honey, or between earth and sky or move like a climbing plant, a volcano or a

sea star. The third way is relative to DMT's mode of evaluation, bringing us to ask ourselves about which *theory of change* underlies our practice.

We need a model that might evaluate change through observing the emerging processes, a model that could consider minimal changes and configurations, until something makes sense. We would observe the transformation process in the patient-group – therapist relationship and contextual complexity. We need to assess the minimal modification or novelty making a difference in the subjective lived experience.

Metapatterns can be a complementary understanding and an instrument of intervention in our practice, given they will inevitably operate in an embodied way. *Metapatterns* are found at the basis of our embodied thought, in the stored archetypal experience and in our living culture. I emphasize that *metapattern, forms, forms of vitality, image schema and morphic fields* are concepts constructed in reference to embodied mind perspectives. They are new ways of describing the process of creating *form* or *forming* in the sense of getting a shape and becoming.

Conclusion

We, dance movement therapists, speak about movement patterns, behaviour patterns, breathing patterns, relational patterns, procedural patterns, alluding to recursive forms that our patients express in their sensorimotor, cognitive, emotional and relational behaviours. We sometimes work with a *micro pattern*, as in the case of respiration, given that it has to do with a deep and basic movement. We focus on incomplete movement habits, which happen apparently without any goal, such as touching our hair or gesticulating. Automatic movements like these manifest simultaneously in a patient's verbal narration (Caldwell, 1996), and express the channelling of levels of anxiety or an unresolved energetic situation (Monda, 2000).

Dance movement therapists work with *metapatterns*, visualising a dynamic or group choreography in process. This implies that we search for regularities, generalized forms and episodic forms. We capture the forms, ways and sequences in which they manifest, trying to decipher the objectives that drive them or the situations that set them off. In slowing down we stop to observe and attend to every detail of the emerging processes. Through this, our own way of working, we *map* and *match up* the patterns. With our very presence, we give meaning, as involved observers. We accompany the discovering, the creativity and the reencountering of

aspects of each person, sometimes the forgotten, sometimes lost and on occasion, completely new aspects of the individual. We illuminate and value the experience exactly as it presents itself, facilitating acceptance and change that occurs without pressure or force. Confrontation, through exploring the less familiar patterns, which require some kind of effort, is also a way in which we work when necessary. We are not just observers; we are also a special kind of choreographer that participates by having a different role in the collective creation.

Movement has symbolic efficiency in itself without relating to explicit meaning. To dance in a circle generates a feeling experience in itself. It certainly does have a meaning for the patient, but it might be unconscious and it is ok if it remains implicit. That is why DMT doesn't work with interpretation in the psychoanalytical sense; we are, however, always trying to understand and to make our own interpretations about the lived experiences.

We see how diverse fields of knowledge meet in the embodied understanding of the experience through *Trans contextual metapatterns*. On the other hand, an apple is an apple. We come back to the tautology of knowledge which Maturana (1984) and Varela, (2002) made familiar to us. *A being is, by being what it is*. We, in the same way as dance movement therapists, are part of the transformations that take place on the way by being with others, composing with our fellow-beings like chemical entities that combine properties. Therefore, if what it is continues being, and at the same time tries to improve the systems' advantages and survival, then our work is on track.

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